

## FOREST FIRES.

HOW THEY START AND HOW THEY ARE FOUGHT.

## LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS IN THIS STATE FOR PREVENTION—THE FIRE WARDEN'S DUTIES—FIGHTING THEM BY "BACK FIRING."

People who have seen bits of brush on fire here and there in rural districts, where one patch of woodland is separated from another by fields, are prone to believe that they know something of what is meant by a forest fire, and find it difficult, perhaps, to understand why these forest fires should be regarded so seriously or why the Adirondack summer holidaymakers should be driven out of their quarters by such accidents. The truth is that there is an immense difference between a brush fire and a forest fire strictly so called. The former is a frequent cause of the latter but while it remains only a brush fire it is to the forest fire proper as the lighted candle in the cellar is to the gas explosion—a threat of calamity but not the calamity itself. The one is only a burning of slender brushwood, cut or growing, of little volume, and not affording fuel sufficient to produce very intense heat; the other is the combustion of forest trees of a course of a resounding nature, in which branches 20 and 30 inches thick stand upright, all go to feed the blaze.

Four large ones which have raged in the Adirondacks in the last ten days and have strained the resources of the State authorities to extinguish them are one of the public dangers against which the people can be to some degree, safeguarded; but only by public action. Those who have made a study of such matters are unanimous that, however stringent the laws enacted as preventive of forest fire, and however careful and indefatigable the official administration of those laws, there can be no reasonable security unless a widespread wholesome realization of the danger exists among the unofficial public. Proof of this is found in the actual difficulty of tracing recent fires to their sources. Rumors of all sorts attribute the trouble to different causes—to accident and to malice of lawless persons, who have felt the irksomeness of game law restrictions—but a fire is a thing of proverbial humble and obscure origin, and in the enormous extent of mountain country to be safeguarded it is impossible for supervisors or game protectors to keep incessant watch and ward over every little pile of brushwood or every campfire. In many cases the fire begins with a pile of debris left by careless campers, or a campfire which has not been extinguished with water by summer campers. Hence the public individually must in this matter be the guardian of the public's collective right and safety.

## LOSS OF VAULT WHILE FIGHTING.

It is well to remember that the damage done by a genuine forest fire does not end with the general stampede of summer visitors, fishing and hunting parties and farmers, nor even with the destruction of a few log or frame houses. The timber burned has its value to the community as cover for the larger game, which, as every one knows, is tending to become extinct under the normal conditions of increasing population; while to its owners this timber is, of course, valuable property in itself. Beyond this there is the destruction of the soil itself. In a mountain region the soil is only a shallow deposit of vegetable matter accumulated in the course of centuries by the annual falling of leaves and twigs from the trees. Much of this vegetable matter is combustible, all the more so because it is composed of wood pulp which is easily ignitable. When the vast mass of flame sweeps over it, it is reduced to potash down to its deepest layer, next to the rock. Now, potash has its uses in agriculture and in horticulture no doubt, but a soil consisting exclusively of potash with hardly any carbon, and that at the bottom of it, is worthless for tillage. So the land in the Adirondacks, at least which has been cleared by a forest fire, while it ceases to be woodland does not, in compensation, become arable. It simply becomes desert, and must await the action of centuries before it can ever again be useful even to the bear and the deer. It is well also to remember that human lives are often sacrificed in these disasters; the death list at Hominy Mine, in the great forest fire in 1894 amounting to 418.

Successive legislatures of this State have been, it seems, fairly alive to the dangers of forest fires. The laws of New-York relating to Game and Forests enacted in 1826, and amended in 1846, 1850, 1857, 1868, and 1886, provided for both the prevention of these calamities and their remedy, so far as any legislative and administrative action can either prevent or remedy them. Besides the comprehensive powers of the State Board of Fisheries, Game and Forest over the State Forest preserve, delegated to Major Pond and his thirty-two subordinate protectors and foresters, there is the provision of Section 270 of the laws of 1886 as amended by Chapter 623 of 1896, which provides that the Board of Fisheries, Game and Forests shall appoint a fire warden in each town—within the counties of Clinton, Franklin, Essex, Fulton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Wayne, Washington, Cattaraugus, Allegany and Erie—and in the counties of Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, and Onondaga—who shall act during the pleasure of

such Board. In each of these towns where particularly exposed to forest fire or in which there is a large proportion of woodlands, the fire warden thus appointed shall divide the town into two or more districts, bounded as far as may be by roads, streams of water, dividing ridges of land or lot lines, and appoint in writing, one resident man in each district as district fire warden *"provisor."* In addition to this, Section 270 provides that in all towns not provided for under the former section, "the supervisors shall be fire wardens *ex-officio,* and there shall be appointed to them all the provisions of this act with reference to town and district fire wardens." These fire wardens are, of course, to be recruited among the preventive apparatus. They are armed and empowered also with important functions in cases of fire.

## THE CITIZEN RESTRICTED.

The liberty of the citizen is limited in many directions with the same view of preventing forest fires. Fires for the purpose of clearing land are forbidden from April 1 and July 10 and between September 1 and November 10. At other times such fires may not be started without notice to and permission from a fire warden Railroad companies whose land passes through waste or unused lands or lands liable to be affected by fire, from the State, shall twice in each year cut and remove from its right of way all grass, herbage or other inflammable material. A stream running through forest lands shall be bordered with eight feet and such an opening made through the cutting to give a space of at least three feet between the edge of the cutting and the bank of the stream.

These are the principal legislative provisions of this State against the accident of forest fire. They are not unlike those in force in Manitoba and other Western States which have suffered in this way, save that omission being that nothing is said to the making of "safety stripes" or stakes cut in the forest parallel to streams or other natural obstacles to the spread of fire. But this provision may be fairly considered as no more than an equivalent for the New-York division into districts, bounded as far as may be by roads, streams of water, dividing ridges of land or lot lines.

As to a remedy for a forest fire once started, Charles B. Reynolds, of "Forest and Stream," when asked for his opinion, said lately:

No. If a fire has once taken hold of the forest, nothing under heaven can stop it unless a heavy shower of rain is to be considered something under heaven. Besides the hand-to-hand, primitive, dangerous and not hopeful method of beating out the fire, which at best can only be practised where the tree is in low bunch of grass, and is not struck so hard that it amounts to a genuine forest fire, there is in the comparatively dry forests of the West the heroic remedy of letting water, in advance of the fire and pouncing road drivers to be shed of poison with water. This, of course, is as good as impossible in mountainous regions. At least, safety stripes and such obstacles are of small avail against a fire that is consuming resounding forest trees. The flames, in such cases, leap through the air. Mr. Reynolds already quoted says that a forest fire in a mountainous country has been known to clear a half a mile wide which stood in its course.

## FIGHTING IT BY BACK FIRING.

The only large measure which seems to be of any avail in the wooded highlands is "back firing." It is a method of fighting fire with fire, and consists in first finding a large tract of land to leeward of the oncoming fire, and then, having made sure that means are at hand there to keep the fire under control, setting fire to it so as to thus reverse the fire and forming a kind of artificial firebreak.

In the ranks of fighting forces, fire, the fire warden of New-York State has at his disposal, by law, the assistance of "any person in his district or adjoining district or town," and any person refusing to act or assist when so called on or warned out shall forfeit to the people of the State the sum of \$10. But if, as has been reported in the recent Adirondack fires, the persons so "warned out" have reasons of spite for wishing the fire to run its course, the amount of the fine so seems would be a very slight argument in favor of obedience to the law. If the number of spite workers disconcerted can prove the Board or by citizens who have been punished for violations of the game laws, above it is well rounded; it is lamentable to observe how the law provides against itself, or against its setting free, wherefore such fires are caused or endangered. One year's imprisonment and a fine of \$250, as the maximum punishment, Considering the serious possibilities of these fires as well as the certain losses caused by them the punishment hardly seems to fit the "mean" as the law defines it, the *"mean."*

## THE BUGLER WHO FOUGHT.

Mandalay—*Ex-Soldier of Leslies Weekly.*

It is a tradition that an unshod man gets a chance to be a part of the fight to save himself. That is now however counteracted by Captain Mandaray finding that Lt. Company was the far better to hear orders sent his bugler after the bugle had struck the charge. As the first note he struck it was right here that the bugle went to the time being that he was only too commanding officers orders. He was ordered to run up to move on the jump-rope given him. He thought to be lost. He had to stand on the jump-rope. Boss, his superior, heard him and gave him the command to move on. He did not want to move on. Not even yet was the bugle struck again. So he moved on. He crossed with his bugle in the rear of the gunning made his mind how fast and hot by the

time the bugler came to himself and relinquished the notion of fight; director the poor fellows of Lt. Company were troubled with shorts of breath. In this brisk affair according to the official report, the dead reached a total of about sixty, including some officers. It is the enemy's dead that is meant of course. Twenty-one Mawers and six Rommingtons were the spoils of this field.

## THE MISUNDERSTOOD MANGO.

## WHEN THE ART OF EATING IT IS LEARNED.

## IT MAY BECOME POPULAR HERE.

At just this time of the year the expansion of the United States and its Territories is sending thoughts home to New-Yorkers by the appearance of West Indian mangoes upon the walls of the downtown fruit dealers who make a specialty of recherche food. And yet, in spite of the fact that the mango is the pride and glory of America's own Porto Rico, in spite of the Philippine origin of the fruit and the Tagalog origin of its name, it cannot be said that the mango has inaugurated itself as yet into the favor of its fellow citizens.

About the fruit itself, it is interesting to note that, so far as the botany books go, it was first found in Cochin in the Philippines, transplanted thence by Spanish or Portuguese adventurers to Southern India, thence again to Africa, and finally brought from Africa to the British West Indies by a Scotch gardener about the end of the last century. The name is, as we see, the only foreign word in the English dictionary.

Thus, the mango, ranging in their own country, where they grow in perfection, say that there are only two varieties worthy to be ranked as choice food, and that these two varieties are not to be described as fine types.

One of these varieties is the maculata, which, as its name has hardly a shade of red or yellow in its skin, but only a dull saffron-green. The other, the No. 11, is said because it is the only one brought to Jamaica in a case so numerous, and because it is a delicate and aromatic flavor and for its hardly sensitive character, which is fair condition.

Both the 11 and the No. 11 are free from that protrusion of coarsely hanging hair which makes the carcass of so many mangoes uninviting. The mango, commoner of the West Indies, comes in bunches to more than two dozen. Moreover, it is a good power to be the outside skin, which is the best, therefore avoiding the taste of tannin and taste of a bad never to eat a mango except in a swimming bath; perhaps if these peculiar conditions are once properly understood in this country the mango may receive wider popularity here.

## KIPPLING'S SPAGHETTI HIS SILVER PLATE.

From "Kipling and Spaghetti."

My note about Kipling having taken Pacific salmon with a gun, and the impudent adhesion thereto, was soon noticed in the game department of "Troy Journal" and "Forest and Stream" and elsewhere. J. M. Marston, the Editor of "The Forest Gazette," has clipping to the repudiation of the charge, with his reply, to Mr. Kipling, which reads as follows: "I hope you'll excuse me for troubling you with your answer, and send me yours."

Having heard several anglers who have fished the Pacific Coast and the Gulf of California say that it was best to use a net, we sent Mr. Cheney's book to Mr. Rudyard Kipling, and his reply shows he wants to catch his trout with a gun. His answer is most likely true, as Kipling's answer appears at the end.

Having heard several anglers who have fished the Pacific Coast and the Gulf of California say that it was best to use a net, we sent Mr. Cheney's book to Mr. Rudyard Kipling, and his reply shows he wants to catch his trout with a gun. His answer is most likely true, as Kipling's answer appears at the end.

Dear Mr. Marston: In the language of the immortal saying, "You Saxon, Speach!" This is a note of the 11. Those stripes won't run to it.

I return the cutting, sincerely,

RUDYARD KIPLING

To R. B. Marston, Esq.—Mr. Kipling having informed us that it was a special delicacy that he used Pacific salmon in the preparation of his spaghetti, we hasten to assure him that he need not be sorry for his taste; his spaghetti is indeed delicious. We have always eaten spaghetti with spaghetti, but the spaghetti in our family is made of flour, salt, pepper, oil and vinegar, and is not too good for a child to eat, though it is very good.

Bear with me while I explain the difference between spaghetti and spaghetti with spaghetti.

Up to the present moment 10,000,000 acres have been occupied by this, which requires all the available agricultural land.

But notwithstanding the Russian Government allows thousands of immigrants still to swarm into Siberia, and to go to work in the barren and miserly marsh lands. The reason of the government's anxiety is due to the fact that the officials of course are to get rid of the starving thousands of European Russia.

There is no great influence with these fresh immigrants. The majority are beggars and scamps more ignorant than the Asiatic already in Siberia.

The Russo-Japan war, owing to the recent day previous to writing, has cost the Russians no less than 500,000 men.

## HIS COASTAL TROUBLE.

From "The China Circular."

It is grand, as far as I can see, to be a bugler in the army of Major Lee.

I don't see any reason for not looking forward to the next battle.

He is a slight exception, on his summer vacation.

## BRITISH CAMPAIGN PLANS.

## HOW AN ENGLISH REGIMENT LOOKS WHEN IT STARTS OUT FOR ACTIVE SERVICE.

The khaki and duck uniforms were unknown to the land forces of the United States before the war with Spain, but their superiority over the regular cloth uniforms became so apparent then that the lighter material will probably be retained in use as long as troops are sent to the tropics. In adopting this material the United States Government followed the example of England, where the advantages of the khaki and duck uniforms have been established by years of use.

If war should follow the difficulties with the Boers, the men who will be mobilized under General Sir Frederick William Edward Foote-Walker will all be clad in khaki. The men are sent forward in the regular passenger steamers and not on transports. This is done in keeping with the practice in the charts of the various transportation companies, which, in view of a close demand, only must be ready at any time to convert the passenger steamers into army transports. Regiments leave their home stations in the colors, for the English uniforms are becoming more and more uniform, and if the design is in a place where such may be a risk, then for the name and rank is assumed, but if they are to travel across continents, and not through the English Channel, the colors are exchanged for white, and the men wear uniforms for winter.

Rungs and standards, which were much looked upon as essential features in a military expedition, are taken along but are not put away before the troops go into action, as in an English regiment which had been sent to the war in South Africa, with blue or white regiments would not be recognized in khaki. The men carry the Lee-Metford rifle, and the equipment includes a haversack knapsack, a rolled blanket and water bottle, weight about fifty-six pounds.

The cavalry and artillery are armed with carbines and some of the troops carry Martini rifles, but the men who are still in active service are all armed with the Lee-Metford rifle.

The khaki uniforms wipe out all difference as to superiority or gaudiness in dress, and the grades of the regiments can be seen only by the bicornes. The royal regiments have their uniforms faced with blue, the Irish with green, and the Scotch with yellow, while the regiments which do not come under these colors wear the white facings.

## AN ARTIFICIAL SILVER MINE.

HOW THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT HICKOK'S WASTE AT THE MINTS.

From "The New-Orleans Times" & Democrat.

In one corner of the mint room at the New-Orleans Mint, a large iron tank in which newly cast silver bars are dropped when melted. At the end of a hard day's work the surface of the water shows a faint rainbow and a sun like the metallic lustre of stagnant water seen near a dry house. It comes in part from the metallic flakes or dust that has fallen in the cooling. The water when changed goes down a pipe that terminates in the bottom of a cistern which contains a layer of mud a foot deep. As the water seeps upward through the mud acts as a filter and collects the particles of precious metal, so in time comes an artificial silver mine. Once every quarter the stuff is washed up and passed through a reduction process. The result is a ver bricke weight metal, weight 1,500.

When it comes to money making Uncle Sam can beat the world for stinginess. The amount of gold in the vaults of the old mint room is only one of his numerous schemes for saving. When the minters leave their working places to collect the dust that has fallen in the cooling, the water when changed goes down a pipe that terminates in the bottom of a cistern which contains a layer of mud a foot deep. As the water seeps upward through the mud acts as a filter and collects the particles of precious metal, so in time comes an artificial silver mine. Once every quarter the stuff is washed up and passed through a reduction process. The result is a ver bricke weight metal, weight 1,500.

But notwithstanding the Russian Government allows thousands of immigrants still to swarm into Siberia, and to go to work in the barren and miserly marsh lands.

The immigration is induced by a committee of officials who numbers portion out the land through which the new railway runs.

Up to the present moment 10,000,000 acres have been occupied by this, which requires all the available agricultural land.

But notwithstanding the Russian Government allows thousands of immigrants still to swarm into Siberia, and to go to work in the barren and miserly marsh lands.

The Russo-Japan war, owing to the recent day previous to writing, has cost the Russians no less than 500,000 men.

This is a slight exception, on his summer vacation.

## SCARF IT, ETC.

From "The London Journal."

A scarf has been adopted as a military uniform at one end and a fire at the other.

What is "scarf" in the language of the

British Government? Is it an appendage of the uniform?

Does a soldier feel better when wearing the

scarf at the same end?